Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 128448

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TO USINT DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 128448

TOSEC 261

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)
SUBJ: FOREIGN PRESS REACTIONS

REF: SECTO 18
TO EAGLEBURGER FROM HYLAND

1. FOLLOWING IS FOURTH INR ROUNDUP OF FOREIGN PRESS REACTIONS TO SALZBURG PRESS CONFERENCE AVAILABLE AS OF 1400 EDT, JUNE 15.

2. ISRAEL: THE PRESS TREATMENT OF THE SECRETARY'S THREATENED RESIGNATION HAS HEIGHTENED THE PUBLIC'S SENSE OF THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF WATERGATE ON THE CONDUCT OF US FOREIGN POLICY. THE CONSENSUS, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO BE A NOTE OF REGRET THAT WATERGATE HAS BEEN INJECTED INTO THE PARAMOUNT PROBLEM OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

3. LEBANON:

(A) THE WIDELY READ, INDEPENDENT AN-NAHAR SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS "STRANGE" THAT PRESIDENT NIXON AND SECRETARY KISSINGER, "WHO ARE BEING CALLED LIARS IN AMERICA, ARE BEING RECEIVED IN ARAB COUNTRIES AS HONEST MEN...WHOSE WORD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 128448

CAN BE TRUSTED...."

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

(B) THE CONSERVATIVE AL-HAYAT QUESTIONED WHY "THE INTERROGATION" OF THE SECRETARY WAS TAKING PLACE FOLLOWING HIS "SUCCESSFUL MISSION." AND IT WENT ON: "DO NIXON'S AND KISSINGER'S ENEMIES PLAN TO PUSH THIS CASE TO ITS CONCLUSION WHILE THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?"

4. POLAND: THE WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT OF THE POLISH PRESS AGENCY DISCUSSED FOUR THEORIES EXPLAINING WHY THE SECRETARY CHOSE THE MOMENT HE DID TO MAKE "HIS DRAMATIC STATEMENT": (A) OVERWORK WAS RESPONSIBLE; (B) FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS SUCCESSES MUST HAVE PRIORITY OVER WATERGATE, AND IRRESPONSIBLE JOURNALISTS WHO ACT AGAINST THE VITAL INTERESTS OF THE US MUST BE DISCREDITED; (C) THE AIM WAS TO TAKE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OF THE RESULTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST TOUR AND TO ENSURE THE IMPORTANCE OF US FOREIGN POLICY; AND (D) THE AIM WAS TO "HUSH UP" THE AFFAIR IN THE WAY THAT AN OIL-WELL FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED BY AN EXPLOSIVE BLAST. THE CORRESPONDENT SAID THAT NONE OF THE THEORIES PROVIDES A FULL EXPLANATION.

5. PANAMA: THE SEMI-INDEPENDENT LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA CARRIED A LEAD EDITORIAL SAYING THAT PRESIDENT NIXON'S ADVERSARIES MAY THINK TO DEPRIVE HIM OF "HIS VERY EFFICIENT COLLABORATOR" BY ACCUSING DR. KISSINGER. BUT, SAID THE PAPER, "FORTUNATELY...NOBLE AND SANE PEOPLE IN THE CAPITAL WILL ANALYZE THE SITUATION OBJECTIVELY AND CALMLY" AND THE "GREAT MAJORITY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL NOT BE SWAYED BY THE INTRIGUES OF A FEW FRUSTRATED POLITICIANS."

6. ARGENTINA: A LA PRENSA COLUMNIST ASSERTED THAT THE SECRETARY CHOSE THE RIGHT TIME TO ISSUE HIS STATEMENT AND THAT "TO LET HIM GO WOULD MEAN DISOWNING HIS MISSION, DISMISSING ITS FABULOUS RESULTS."

7. USSR: STILL NO REACTION NOTED.

8. CHINA: STILL NO REACTION NOTED. SISCO

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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